

No. 28 – San Luis Obispo County Integrated Regional Water Management Region

Region Acceptance Process Summary

General Description of Region

The San Luis Obispo County (SLO) Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Region is located on the Pacific Coast between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The SLO IRWM Region is one of six IRWM Regions within the Central Coast Funding Area. This Region borders the Greater Monterey County IRWM Region and Santa Barbara County IRWM Region. The SLO IRWM Region boundary encompasses 7 cities and 15 unincorporated communities on 9 major watersheds.

The Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) for the SLO IRWM Region currently consists of three members: the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Los Osos Community Services District (CSD), and the CSD. All three organizations have adopted this Region's IRWM Plan, and the SLO RWMG communicates regularly with the other RWMGs in the Central Coast funding area. The San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District has the oversight over most of the area inside the Region. Los Osos CSD has its focus on nitrate contamination, seawater intrusion and litigation in the Los Osos Valley Groundwater Basin. The RWMG representatives informed DWR that the Los Osos wastewater issue creates an affordability challenge, where the cost of meeting water quality standards will amount to 6.5 percent of the median household income.

In their RAP application, the SLO RWMG described their governance structure and emphasized their working relationship with the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC). WRAC is a water management organization dating back 50 years, with 30 members and a subcommittee that focuses on IRWM. The RWMG works with WRAC to avoid creating a “redundant structure” and receives policy endorsements from WRAC. Overall, the SLO RWMG appears to have a good working relationship with water management groups in the Region through the WRAC, and cooperates with adjacent IRWM Regions.

Interview Conclusions- Approved

No changes to the San Luis Obispo County IRWM Region boundaries are suggested by DWR.

To ensure interagency cooperation, DWR requested that the RWMG send letters of cooperation to confirm their continuing commitment to work with the Greater Monterey County, Santa Barbara County, and the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County IRWM Regions on interregional issues. The areas of emphasis for the interregional cooperation include the water resource/management issues within the Santa Maria watershed, the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin, Nacimiento Watershed, Cuyama Watershed, and Rincon Creek Watershed. DWR received two letters of cooperation: 1) San Luis Obispo County Sustainable Water Resources, Santa Barbara County, and Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County agencies letter, dated June 26, 2009, and 2) Monterey County Water Resources and San Luis Obispo County Sustainable Water Resources agencies letter, dated July 9, 2009. Both letters confirm interregional cooperation.

To be eligible for Proposition 84 funding, the San Luis Obispo RWMG may need to expand their RWMG to include entities necessary to develop and implement the IRWM Plan (California Water Code CWC §10539.)